## REMARKS

In view of the above amendments and following remarks, Applicant requests favorable reconsideration of the above-identified application.

Claims 1-97 are now pending in this application, with Claims 1, 8, 15, 16, 22, 28, 35, 42, 52, 59, 66, 74, and 82 being independent. By this Amendment, Applicant has amended Claims 1, 8, 15-18, 21-24, 27-30, 33, 35-37, 40, 42-44, 47-53, 59, 60, 66, 67, 74, 75, 82 and 83. Applicant submits that no new matter has been added.

In the Office Action, Claims 1-15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,812,747 (Kayano et al.). Claims 16-97 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as allegedly being unpatentable over Kayano et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,630,062 (Okutsu). Applicant traverses these rejections.

In aspects of Applicant's invention, each of independent Claims 1 and 8 generally recites that an image output control apparatus is controlled to select a cascade outputting mode in which output processing of input data is allotted to plural image output devices. Each of Claims 1 and 8, as amended, recites that the control apparatus includes control means, or controlling, for prohibiting a reception of a user request in a case where the same-sized output media are not stored in the plural image output devices, and permitting the reception of the user request in a case where the same-sized output media are stored in the plural image output devices. The control means, or controlling, causes the plural image output devices to execute the outputting operation for the cascade outputting mode after permitting the reception of the user request and accepting the user request.

In other aspects of Applicant's invention, Claim 15 generally recites a storage medium which stores computer-readable computer codes for executing control processing of an image output control apparatus adapted to control output images of input data using plural image output devices. Claim 15, as amended, recites that the storage medium includes the codes of executing control processing of prohibiting a reception of a user request in a case where the same-sized output media are not stored in the plural image output devices, and permitting the reception of the user request in a case where the same-sized output media are stored in the plural image output devices. The control processing causes the plural image output devices to execute the outputting operation for the cascade outputting mode after permitting the reception of the user request and accepting the user request.

In other aspects of Applicant's invention, each of independent Claims 16, 22, 28, 35 and 42 generally recites an image output system (or image output device system) including plural image output devices. As amended, Claim 16/22/28/35 recites that each of the plural image output devices includes a controller adapted to prohibit a reception of an instruction from the user in a case where the same output medium/an output medium of the same size/an output medium of the same type/an output medium of the same size and the same type is not set in both of the user's device and an another image output device, and to permit the reception of the instruction from the user in a case where the same output medium/the output medium of the same size/the output medium of the same type/the output medium of the same size and the same type is set in both of the user's device and the another image output device. The controller allows an execution of the cascade

printing operation in the user's device and the another image output device, after permitting the reception of the instruction from the user and accepting the instruction. As amended, Claim 42 recites that each of the plural image output devices includes a controller adapted to prohibit a reception of an instruction from the user in a case where a certain resource is not set in both of the user's device and the another image output device even if the another image output device has the same function as the user's device has, and to permit the reception of the instruction from the user in a case where the certain resource is set in both of the user's device and the another image output device. The controller allows an execution of the cascade printing operation in the user's device and the another image output device, after permitting the reception of the instruction from the user and accepting the instruction.

In still other aspects of Applicant's invention, each of independent Claims 52, 59, 66, 74 and 82 generally recites a method of operating an image output system which includes plural image output devices. As amended Claim 52/59/66/74 recites that the method includes: a step of prohibiting a reception of and instruction from the user in a case where the same output medium/an output medium of the same size/an output medium of the same type/an output medium of the same size and the same type is not set in each of the plural image output devices; a step of permitting the reception of the instruction from the user in a case where the same output medium/the output medium of the same size/the output medium of the same type/the output medium of the same size and the same type is set in each of said plural image output devices; and a step of allowing an execution of the cascade printing operation in each of the plural image output devices, after permitting the reception of the instruction from the user and accepting the instruction. As amended,

Claim 82 recites that the method includes: a step of prohibiting a reception of an instruction from the user, even if each of the plural image output devices has the same function, in a case where certain resource is not set in each of the plural image output devices; a step of permitting the reception of the instruction from the user in a case where the certain resource is set in each of the plural image output devices; and a step of allowing an execution of the cascade printing operation in each of the plural image output devices, after permitting the reception of the instruction from the user was permitted and accepting the instruction.

Applicant submits that at least the above-referenced features of Applicant's claimed invention are not taught or suggested by the cited references, whether those references are taken alone or in combination.

Kayano et al. is directed to a copying system including a plurality of copying apparatus each capable of sharing information with other copy apparatus. Kayano et al. discloses at col. 7, line 41 through col. 8, line 10 that once copying is initiated (that is after accepting a print copying job) and the inter-connected mode is selected, the master copying machine requests the slave copying machines to send to the master copying machine status information indicating the specifications of the copying machines and the function status. The master copying machine selects the proper copying machine to perform the copying job. If subsequently there is a problem such as a paper jam, the master copying machine requests that another copying machine finish the copying job. In other words, Kayano et al. only discloses the functions and functionality of a copying system subsequent to a print job being accepted. There is no teaching or suggestion that a particular request or instruction can be prohibited prior to a print job being accepted and

copying initiated. Accordingly, Applicant submits that Kayano et al. does not teach or suggest at least the above-referenced features recited in independent Claims 1, 8, 15, 16, 22, 28, 35, 42, 52, 59, 66, 74 and 82.

Okutsu is directed to a print system in which one of the printers connected to a network is selected in accordance with the attributes of print data. As disclosed at col. 8, lines 25-38, of Okutsu, once print data has been sent from a host computer, the print data is stored on a hard disk of a printer. If that printer is unable to perform the print operation, it checks the capabilities of other printers on the network and transfers the print job to a printer which can print the print data. Like Kayano et al., however, Okutsu only discloses the functions and functionality of a print system subsequent to print data being sent from the host computer. Accordingly, as with Kayano et al., Applicant submits that there is no teaching or suggestion that a particular request or instruction can be prohibited prior to print data being stored on the hard disk of a printer. Thus, Applicant submits that Okutsu fails to remedy the above-noted deficiencies of Kayano et al., and that Okutsu fails to teach or suggest at least the above-referenced features recited in independent Claims 1, 8, 15, 16, 22, 28, 35, 42, 52, 59, 66, 74 and 82.

For the foregoing reasons, Applicant submits that the cited references, whether taken alone or in combination, fail teach or suggest important features of Applicant's claimed invention. Applicant requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102 and 103.

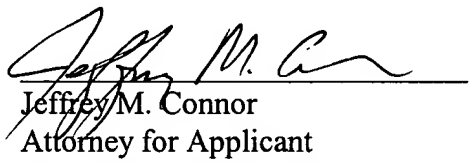
Applicant, therefore, submits that the present invention is patentably defined by independent Claims 1, 8, 15, 16, 22, 28, 35, 42, 52, 59, 66, 74 and 82. Dependent Claims 2-7, 9-14, 17-21, 23-27, 29-34, 36-41, 43-51, 53-58, 60-65, 67-73, 75-81 and 83-97

are also patentable, in their own right, for defining features of the invention in addition to those recited in the independent. Individual consideration of the dependent claims is requested.

Applicant submits that the present application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration, withdrawal of the rejections set forth in the above-noted Office Action and an early Notice of Allowability are requested.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,



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